

REMARKS

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the present application in view of the foregoing amendments and in view of the reasons that follow.

Claims 9 and 17 have been cancelled.

This amendment adds, changes and/or deletes claims in this application. A detailed listing of all claims that are, or were, in the application, irrespective of whether the claim(s) remain under examination in the application, is presented, with an appropriate defined status identifier.

After amending the claims as set forth above, claims 1-8, 10-16, 18, and 19 are now pending in this application.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 1-19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. The claims have been amended to overcome these rejections. Withdrawal of these rejections is respectfully requested.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1-8 and 12-16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by JP 6-115786 or JP 6-74104. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

JP 6-115786 and JP 6-74104 do not satisfy all of the limitations of independent claims 1 and 2. For example, neither JP 6-115786 nor JP 6-74104 disclose “wherein the support members each comprise a contact member, an insertion section having a surface, and a flange.” In another example, neither JP 6-115786 nor JP 6-74104 disclose “wherein the contact members comprise an erected section and a base section, wherein the contact members engage with and travel along inclined grooves formed in the surface of the insertion section of each respective support member.” In another example, neither JP 6-115786 nor JP 6-74104 disclose “wherein the pair of support means each comprise a sleeve and a support member.”

For at least these reasons, JP 6-115786 and JP 6-74104 fail to disclose all of the limitations of claims 1 and 2. Withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 9-11 and 17-19 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over either JP 6-115786 or JP 6-74104 in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,299,099 (hereafter “Miller”). This rejection is respectfully traversed because claims 10, 11, 18, and 19 depend from independent claims 1 and 2, respectively, and are allowable therewith for at least the reasons set forth above without regard to the further patentable limitations contained in these dependent claims.

Claims 10 and 18 depend from claims 1 and 2, respectively, and are allowable therewith for at least the reasons set forth above without regard to the further patentable limitations contained in claims 10 and 18. These patentable limitations include “wherein the inclined grooves are gradually shallower in a radial direction so that as the base section of the contact member moves towards the flange the base section projects further from the insertion section.”

As noted in the previous response filed on December 7, 2005, the combination of JP 6-115786 or JP 6-74104 and Miller fails to disclose or suggest all of the limitations of claims 10 and 18 because the pressure translating pieces 52 of Miller are incapable of moving towards a flange of the support member because the pressure translating pieces 52 are constrained in this direction of movement. The Office Action, including the Response to Arguments section on pages 4 and 5, does not provide a basis or reason why the combination of JP 6-115786 or JP 6-74104 and Miller discloses or teaches all of the limitations of claims 10 and 18. Withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Applicants believe that the present application is now in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration of the application as amended is respectfully requested.

The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone if it is felt that a telephone interview would advance the prosecution of the present application.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required regarding this application under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16-1.17, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. Should no proper payment be enclosed herewith, as by a check or credit card payment form being in the wrong amount, unsigned, post-dated, otherwise improper or informal or even entirely missing, the Commissioner is authorized to charge the unpaid amount to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. If any extensions of time are needed for timely acceptance of papers submitted herewith, Applicant hereby petitions for such extension under 37 C.F.R. §1.136 and authorizes payment of any such extensions fees to Deposit Account No. 19-0741.

Respectfully submitted,

Date 20 June 2006

FOLEY & LARDNER LLP
Customer Number: 22428
Telephone: (202) 672-5413
Facsimile: (202) 672-5399

By George E. Quillin

George E. Quillin
Attorney for Applicant
Registration No. 32,792